

# How Jesus Builds His Church

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Acts 16:11-40 ▪ January 22, 2023 ▪ Brad Manley

Jesus builds His Church by \_\_\_\_\_ all kinds of \_\_\_\_\_.

Jesus builds His Church by \_\_\_\_\_ down all kinds of \_\_\_\_\_.

Jesus builds His Church by \_\_\_\_\_.

## **Acts 16:11-40**

<sup>11</sup> So, setting sail from Troas, we made a direct voyage to Samothrace, and the following day to Neapolis, <sup>12</sup> and from there to Philippi, which is a leading city of the district of Macedonia and a Roman colony. We remained in this city some days. <sup>13</sup> And on the Sabbath day we went outside the gate to the riverside, where we supposed there was a place of prayer, and we sat down and spoke to the women who had come together. <sup>14</sup> One who heard us was a woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple goods, who was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to pay attention to what was said by Paul. <sup>15</sup> And after she was baptized, and her household as well, she urged us, saying, "If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come to my house and stay." And she prevailed upon us.

<sup>16</sup> As we were going to the place of prayer, we were met by a slave girl who had a spirit of divination and brought her owners much gain by fortune-telling. <sup>17</sup> She followed Paul and us, crying out, "These men are servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to you the way of salvation." <sup>18</sup> And this she kept doing for many days. Paul, having become greatly annoyed, turned and said to the spirit, "I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her." And it came out that very hour.

<sup>19</sup> But when her owners saw that their hope of gain was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace before the rulers. <sup>20</sup> And when they had brought them to the magistrates, they said, "These men are Jews, and they are disturbing our city. <sup>21</sup> They advocate customs that are not lawful for us as Romans to accept or practice." <sup>22</sup> The crowd joined in attacking them, and the magistrates tore the garments off them and gave orders to beat them with rods. <sup>23</sup> And when they had inflicted many blows upon them, they threw them into prison, ordering the jailer to keep them safely. <sup>24</sup> Having received this order, he put them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks.

<sup>25</sup> About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them, <sup>26</sup> and suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken. And immediately all the doors were opened, and everyone's bonds were unfastened. <sup>27</sup> When the jailer woke and saw that the prison doors were open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself, supposing that the prisoners had escaped. <sup>28</sup> But Paul cried with a loud voice, "Do not harm yourself, for we are all here." <sup>29</sup> And the

jailer called for lights and rushed in, and trembling with fear he fell down before Paul and Silas. <sup>30</sup> Then he brought them out and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" <sup>31</sup> And they said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household." <sup>32</sup> And they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house. <sup>33</sup> And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their wounds; and he was baptized at once, he and all his family. <sup>34</sup> Then he brought them up into his house and set food before them. And he rejoiced along with his entire household that he had believed in God.

<sup>35</sup> But when it was day, the magistrates sent the police, saying, "Let those men go." <sup>36</sup> And the jailer reported these words to Paul, saying, "The magistrates have sent to let you go. Therefore come out now and go in peace." <sup>37</sup> But Paul said to them, "They have beaten us publicly, uncondemned, men who are Roman citizens, and have thrown us into prison; and do they now throw us out secretly? No! Let them come themselves and take us out." <sup>38</sup> The police reported these words to the magistrates, and they were afraid when they heard that they were Roman citizens. <sup>39</sup> So they came and apologized to them. And they took them out and asked them to leave the city. <sup>40</sup> So they went out of the prison and visited Lydia. And when they had seen the brothers, they encouraged them and departed. (ESV)

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### ***Personal Reflection or Group Discussion Questions***

**Open:** Share about a time when someone became a believer in Christ that was especially encouraging to you.

**Read:** Acts 16:11-40

1. While in Philippi, a woman named Lydia heard Paul speaking about Jesus (vv. 13-14). What might Luke (the author of Acts) have meant when he noted that "the Lord opened her heart to pay attention to what was said by Paul"? How should this shape our approach to evangelism?
2. The slave girl described in verses 16-19 seemed to speak truly about Paul and Silas' preaching. Why do you think Paul eventually confronted her? Some commentators think the girl became a believer in Jesus. What are some evidences in the passages that would support such a hope?
3. After being stripped, beaten and imprisoned, Paul and Silas prayed and sang to God such that other prisoners could hear (v. 25). What does this tell you about Paul and Silas' perspective on their current circumstances? Have you ever known of unbelievers being affected by observing Christian living?
4. Note the jailer's reaction to Paul and Silas after the earthquake (vv. 26-30). How do you think he now viewed these two men who had been mere prisoners? What various factors may have contributed to his response to them? How have you seen God use unusual circumstances to turn people to Himself?
5. Paul and Silas' answer to the jailer's question about salvation was, "believe in the Lord Jesus Christ" (vv. 30-31). They then "spoke the word of the Lord to him." (v. 32) What might they have said to him in this further instruction? What would you say to someone in a similar situation?
6. When the town magistrate wanted to release Paul and Silas secretly (vv. 35-36), Paul objected (v. 37). Why do you think Paul insisted that the magistrate do this publicly? How do we know when to assert our legal rights and when not to?

**Apply:** As you reflect on ways Jesus worked to build His Church through this passage, how are you encouraged or challenged?

**Pray:** Pray we would be faithful witnesses of Jesus in all circumstances and that we'd have wisdom and sensitivity to know how to best share the Gospel in each situation.